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Inside Communism

By Charles Fenyvesi

In the West, we argue among ourselves whether or not the Soviets sponsor the terrorist international that coalesced in the 1970s.

In the communist East, the connection is taken for granted, and the basis for it is part of any child's education. It is drilled into high school students that Lenin pioneered a strategy of combining two tracks of subversion: one by a legal party working within the system, the other by an underground group specializing in extralegal methods. Members in either organization need not know of the alignment; Politburo directives are carried out by liaison officers known only to a select few.

Graduating seniors are expected to be able to explain why Stalin's policy of building "socialism in one country" the Soviet Union, was "scientifically correct" in the 1920s and why Trotsky's call for world revolution was "reckless"—because the Soviet Union was not yet strong enough to undertake such a mission. Ambitious youngsters expound the view, the truth in Stalin's time, that German agent Trotsky proposed foreign adventures to drain Soviet resources. No one can graduate unless he is able to apportion praise to the Party as "the vanguard of the proletariat," to "the popular front"—a temporary linkup with social democrats and bourgeois nationalists—and to "the international solidarity of progressive forces"—an obligation to help those fighting capitalism, colonialism and Zionism.

In the communist world, conspiracy is the essential mode of political perception, and as routine a modus operandi as coalition-building is in a democracy. Implanted in East European consciousness is the memory of those hit men and inspectors general—multi-lingual and multi-passported, and Josip Broz Tito the most famous among them—whom Stalin dispatched to form and to disband popular fronts, and to crush any deviation from Moscow's line. In the decades of communist power, each Politburo in Soviet constituent republics and the people's democracies, in Western communist parties and leftist groups, has had a control officer whose identity is known only to his Soviet contact, to whom he reports. Among the co-conspirators, it has not always been easy to decide who is controlling whom, or who is

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exploiting which cause. The memoirs of, say, Muammar Qaddafi and Leonid Brezhnev would read like another "Rashomon."

Perhaps it is a natural law that next to a doughty leftist leader there rises a dour security chief who spearheads that endless hunt for undercover agents reporting to the enemy, "the Judas lurking in our midst" and, hardest to identify and most dangerous, the agent provocateur.

We look back on McCarthyism as a brief un-American spell. From an East European vantage point, Sen. Joseph McCarthy made fear of communism seem a neurosis, and he deprived anti-communism of intellectual respectability. Citing such evidence, some of the most thoughtful people in communist countries believe that McCarthy worked for Moscow—as an agent provocateur, the original Manchurian candidate, Stalin's doppelganger.

East Europeans who thus theorize dismiss as naive any Westerner who argues that the late Wisconsin Republican was never a revolutionary, but a politician with no credo other than self-promotion—as American a failure and as lone a nut as Lee Harvey Oswald.

Today's Soviet liaison officer abroad is less fearful of Moscow than his predecessors. Whether he is a clerk in a state export-import firm or an adviser to a ministry of rural electrification, he enjoys being on the fast track of a victorious cause. He knows that insistence on controlling his charges as tightly as in Stalin's days would be even more counterproductive than it was in Spain, Yugoslavia and China. And it is common sense to him that not to get first to terrorists—revolutionaries by another name—with suitable offers of funds and training would mean letting them go over to the Chinese, to the ayatollahs or, who knows, to the CIA.

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